

***The NASA Space Act Agreement******Partnering with NASA***

[www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/partnership\\_devel/](http://www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/partnership_devel/)

☒ Transparency ☒ Participation ☒ Collaboration

NASA uses Space Act Agreements as the primary vehicle for partnering with the external community. Space Act Agreements enable us to enter into partnerships with organizations that give us access to a wider range of technologies and capabilities that are not part of NASA's core competency. These partnerships expand our ability to meet the difficult technical challenge we face in space exploration, often at virtually no cost to the taxpayer. A solid partnership enables us to bring our expertise, assets, or information together with a partner's core competency to help further our goals for aeronautics research and space exploration while simultaneously furthering the mission of our partner. In this sense, all of our partnerships are strategic alliances.

Through Space Act Agreements we are able to engage a broad spectrum of partners from all disciplines in the public or private sector. Since NASA is a mission-driven Agency and relies heavily on technology, the majority of our Space Act Agreements aim to develop or mature dual-use technologies of relevancy to both NASA and our partner.

**Overview**

The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 (herein, the Space Act), as amended (42 U.S.C. sec 2451 et seq.), authorizes NASA "to enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its work..." with domestic and foreign entities. Under this unique authority, NASA has entered into a large number of agreements with diverse organizations, both in the private and public sectors, in order to meet wide-ranging NASA mission and program requirements. The agreement partner can be a U.S. or foreign person or entity, and academic institution, a Federal, state, or local governmental unit, a foreign government, or an international organization, for profit, or not for profit.

It is NASA's continuing policy to use our broad authority to further NASA's missions and expand our ability to meet difficult technical challenges. "Space Act Agreements" thus entered into under NASA's "other transactions" authority establish a set of legally enforceable terms between NASA and the other party to the agreement. Space Act Agreements constitute Agency commitments of resources such as personnel, funding, services, equipment, expertise, information, or facilities. Space Act agreements can be reimbursable, non-reimbursable, and funded agreements. Reimbursable agreements involve NASA's costs associated with the undertaking to be reimbursed by the agreement partner, either in full or in part. Non-reimbursable agreements are those in which NASA is involved in a mutually beneficial activity that furthers the Agency's missions, wherein each party bears the cost of its participation, and there is no exchange of funds between the parties. Funded agreements are those under which NASA transfers appropriated funds to an agreement partner to accomplish an Agency mission.

### How This Fits into Open Government

The NASA partnership portfolio is both broad and deep. NASA partners with external entities for a wide variety of reasons:

- Develop and mature technology needed by NASA's missions at a lower cost.
- Enhance NASA capabilities perform its mission.
- Engage with the public and our other stakeholders.
- Leverage and or supplement other NASA core missions, such as education and outreach.

NASA engages in about 250 new Space Act agreements each year, many of which involve the lease of unique NASA facilities and joint basic research with the U.S. private sector, academia, and other Federal agencies, as well as with foreign governments and other foreign entities. About half of NASA's partnership agreements involve the U.S. private sector. Agency partnership collaborations generally involve persons and entities primarily from sectors beyond NASA's traditional aerospace community. These initiatives constitute a grassroots open invitation to individuals and entities of all types to contribute their creative ideas for technologies that can be used in NASA's missions.

NASA implements its partnership development activities through offices at each of its 10 Centers. Since NASA's Centers each specialize in a set of particular technology areas (with some overlap), collaborative opportunities involving a particular technology area are best pursued at those Centers with the relevant expertise. NASA has developed an internal tool to streamline the process of partnership development and assure a consistent approach across the Agency.

### Open Government Goals

- Three Months

### NASA, GM Take Giant Leap in Robotic Technology

[www.nasa.gov/topics/technology/features/robonaut.html](http://www.nasa.gov/topics/technology/features/robonaut.html)



*Robonaut2—or R2 for short—is the next generation dexterous robot.*

Engineers and scientists from NASA and General Motors worked together through a Space Act Agreement at the agency's Johnson Space Center in Houston to build a new humanoid robot capable of working side by side with people. Using leading edge control, sensor and vision technologies, future robots could assist astronauts during hazardous space missions and help GM build safer cars and plants.

to

- Transition toward significantly greater development and maturation of technologies through dual use technology development partnering and initiatives involving the emerging commercial space community. NASA expects to see an increase in the number of partnerships focused on the development of the commercial space sector.
- Six Months
  - Redefine the NASA organization to have an Office of the Chief Technologist, which is planned for the beginning of FY 2011. This office will have greater and broader authority than predecessor organizations regarding technology development partnerships.
- One to Two Years
  - Increase resources to enhance reach and impact of Office of Chief Technologist mission, to include partnering initiatives involving Space Act agreements.

**Useful Links**

1. The Space Act: [www.nasa.gov/offices/ogc/about/space\\_act1.html](http://www.nasa.gov/offices/ogc/about/space_act1.html)
2. Innovative Partnerships Program: [www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/home](http://www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/home)
3. How to Partner with NASA: [www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/partner/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/partner/index.html)
4. The Space Act Agreement Guide:  
[www.nasa.gov/pdf/289016main\\_Space%20Act%20Agreements%20Guide%202008.pdf](http://www.nasa.gov/pdf/289016main_Space%20Act%20Agreements%20Guide%202008.pdf)
5. NASA Policy Directive (NPD) 1050.1H, “Authority to Enter into Space Act Agreements:” [nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayDir.cfm?t=NPDandc=1050ands=1H](http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayDir.cfm?t=NPDandc=1050ands=1H)